

**Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports -
Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I
Funds of Innovation and Expansion Activities**

Workforce Investment Act System

The Rehabilitation Act provides remedies and plans for state agencies that do not achieve required performance standards. State Plan Attachment 4.11(e)(2) addresses Unified Plan requirements in their entirety. This attachment clearly demonstrates:

- 1) The public vocational rehabilitation program's descriptions as to achievement of all goals and strategies established in the State Plan attachments 4.11 (c)(1) and 4.11 (d).
- 2) All goals are being achieved.
- 3) The Division of Rehabilitation Services in South Dakota exceeds all standards and indicators pursuant to performance standards in the Rehabilitation Act.
- 4) As evidenced in the Attachment 4.2c and in the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) report to the Governor, there is an evaluation of progress made in improving the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program from the prior year.

Performance outcomes of the vocational rehabilitation program are summarized for and addressed to the Workforce Development Council as well as the State Rehabilitation Councils.

Progress in Accomplishing Strategies and Goals

This section of the State Plan is a summary of the progress in accomplishing the Strategies and Goals as identified in Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) FFY 2012 State Plan Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and 4.11(d).

Goal 1: A VR Services delivery system that results in enhanced earnings, employee benefits, retention and career advancement for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Strategy 1.1: Improve client retention of employment status;

Division Activities:

- Provided training to all VR Counselors on motivational interviewing to enhance the counseling and guidance component of VR services to help clients retain their employment.
- Aberdeen District has implemented client training modules for new applicants so they have a better understanding of how VR will assist them in obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Social Security recipients are encouraged to work with a provider and develop a Plan for Sustaining Employment where support services can continue after the VR case is closed. The percent of SSA recipients utilizing a Plan for Sustaining Support has increased from 41.3% in FFY 2011 to 59% in FFY 2013
- Monitors the number of individuals who have had at least one previous case within the past 3 years. The Division established a baseline in FFY 2012 with an overall average of 24.09% and in FFY 2013 this was 24.56%. The ratings by Districts are listed below:

District	FFY 2012	FFY 2013
Aberdeen	19.05%	22.54%

Brookings	30.9%	27.72%
Rapid City	23.72%	23.23%
Sioux Falls	23.34%	25.98%
Yankton	23.3%	22.39%
Total	24.09%	24.56%

Strategy 1.2: Track the earnings for SSA beneficiaries and implement actions to increase the earnings and employment rate of clients who are SSA beneficiaries;

Division Activities:

- Serves approximately 10% higher than the national average of individuals who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance.
- Weekly earnings at closure have increased from \$187.88 (FFY 2011) to \$194.58 (FFY 2012) to \$204.04 (FFY 2013). The success rate outcomes for SSA closures increased from 50% in FFY 2011 to 53% in FFY 2012 to 61% in FFY 2013. The percent of SSA closed cases increased from 33.8% in FFY 2011 to 36.45% in FFY 2012 to 39.1% in FFY 2013.

Strategy 1.3: Provide specialized support services based upon individual's unique needs to keep their employment;

Division Activities:

- Provided training to VR Counselors and providers on how to utilize person centered planning techniques and more effectively identify the natural supports by the client, family members, case managers, friends, neighbors, and co-workers.
- Promoting the Employment First initiative in South Dakota and has been providing training to Division personnel and providers.
- Conducted a comprehensive survey during FFY 2012 of training needs for providers.
- Participates in the Senior Employment Leadership Network to promote person centered planning by VR Counselors.
- Partners with disability service programs such as Family Support 360 program.

Strategy 1.4: Evaluate and respond to the needs of service providers;

Division Activities:

- Conducted a comprehensive survey during FFY 2012 of training needs for providers. A total of 79 survey responses were received and the majority of providers receiving funding from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program were represented in the survey. The majority (67%) of the providers had a Bachelor's degree with about 14% of the providers having a Master's degree. The survey reflected that a majority of the providers have considerable years' experience in providing job placement and job coaching. The information from the training needs assessment will be utilized in developing future provider trainings by video conference and the annual conference.
- Host monthly meetings with providers to support coordinated employment service efforts and respond to their needs to better serve VR clients.
- Include training sessions for providers during the annual Fall Conference.

Strategy 1.5: Strengthen Benefits Specialists services for VR clients;

Division Activities:

- Maintains contract for benefits specialists services in addition has established two private providers as Benefits Specialists.
- Funded 5 SSA Work Incentives training in FFY 2013 that provided training sessions to VR Clients.
- Benefits specialists services are available to all District Offices. During FFY 2013, 271 individuals received Benefits Specialist's services as identified on their Individualized Plan for Employment. This was a 14.8% increase from the previous year and 337% increase from FFY 2010. The Division monitors the level of benefits counseling services on the annual case file reviews. The case file review completed in April 2012 showed 50% of the SSA Beneficiaries received this service. This is an increase from 2010 review of 31.7%.

Strategy 1.6: Strengthen the Ticket to Work initiatives for Social Security beneficiaries;

Division Activities:

- FFY 2011, the Division has assigned 1,403 Tickets and received \$346,347 in Ticket payments.
- FFY 2012, the Division has assigned 1,674 Tickets and received \$530,681 in Ticket payments.
- FFY 2013, the Division has assigned 2,153 Tickets and received \$545,497 in Ticket payments.

Strategy 1.7: Increase work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities.

Division Activities:

- Utilizes a variety of work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities to include Employment Skills Program (paid work experience), on the job training and job coaching. During FFY 2012, the Employment Skills program increased 18.5% to \$64,011 paid; on the job training increased 7.2% to \$75,399 paid; and job coaching increased 11.7% to \$201,753 paid.

Strategy 1.8: Promote the development & utilization of vocational skills training for individuals in South Dakota.

Division Activities:

- Working with a variety of agencies to establish a pilot initiative utilizing the Think College approach for post-secondary training for individuals with cognitive disabilities.
- Promotion and expansion of the Project Skills program increased 2.6% to 390 students in FFY 2013 as compared to FFY 2011.
- A Project SEARCH site was added in Brookings.
- Increased the percent of clients receiving training services (RSA2 data). In FFY 2007, 26.59% of clients received training, this percentage increased to 31.47% in FFY 2012 but then decreased to 28.77% in FFY 2013

Strategy 1.9: Meet or exceed performance levels established for the Performance Indicators under Evaluation Standard 1- Employment Outcomes & Standard 2 – Equal Access to Services (established in 34 CFR Sec. 361.84(c)(1) of the Federal Regulations).

Division Activities:

- Met all seven indicators for FFY 2012 and FFY 2013. A detail of the results for FFY 2013 are located at the end of this report.

Goal 2: A strong statewide community with the Division presence and partnerships with business, service providers, schools and service organizations.

Strategy 2.1: Raise awareness and understanding of different disabilities and client's strengths that they bring to the work place;

Division Activities:

- The Sioux Falls Office partners with the Sioux Falls Disability Awareness Commission and the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network to provide disability awareness training to schools and employers.
- Vocational Rehabilitation staff participated in the Diversity Fair at Citibank, Barrier Awareness events, Catch the Waive events and Job Fairs.
- Sponsored disability awareness trainings for employers, providers, schools and community organizations in 12 communities.
- Provided training for VR Counselors about specific disorders/disabilities using medical consultants, regional and state-wide trainings and webinars.
- Active members of Mayor's Advisory Boards in Sioux Falls, Watertown, Brookings, Yankton, Mitchell, Milbank, Aberdeen and Rapid City.
- Rapid City Office has established an employer led organization called Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills.
- Sioux Falls Office continues to partner with the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network that is an employer led organization.

Strategy 2.2: Strengthen partnerships with the business community;

Division Activities:

- Funds the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network and has a Division staff member on their board.
- Member of the Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) and Chamber of Commerce in Yankton, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen and Rapid City.
- Provides diversity training with business through the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network, Employer Resource Network and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- The Sioux Falls Division Office and the SF Business Resource Network has enlisted employers to be involved with VR Clients in interviewing, job shadowing and presentations.
- Developed Business Advisory Committees in Sioux Falls and Aberdeen with Project SEARCH.
- Rapid City Office has established an employer led organization called Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills that has been conducting training initiatives with businesses.
- Funds the Freedom to Work website that provides information, success stories and resources for employers.

Strategy 2.3: Strengthen partnerships with organizations serving Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities;

Division Activities:

- The Sioux Falls Division Office continues to work with the Multi-Cultural Center to share information and serve minorities with disabilities. This included training for local providers and Vocational Rehabilitation staff.
- Sponsored the 2012 Fall Conference with the theme of working with Native Americans with disabilities and collaborating with the Tribal VR programs in South Dakota.
- Works with the four Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs through regular meetings and networking.
- Held two public meetings during FFY 2012 and two public meetings during FFY 2013 on the Reservations to solicit input from Native Americans with disabilities.
- Worked to maintain representation of the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program on the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Vocational Rehabilitation staff attended Pow Wows and Native American tribal meetings.

Strategy 2.4: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services with elementary and secondary school systems;

Division Activities:

- Works with secondary schools to promote Project Skills and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Fund the Transition Services Liaison Project to provide technical assistance and outreach to elementary and secondary school systems, in collaboration with the Department of Education Special Education Programs
- Sponsored ten regional transition forums during FFY 2013.
- Sponsored four Catch the Wave events during FFY 2013 where 348 people attended.
- Sponsored disability awareness events in schools during October.
- Sioux Falls office participates in the Sioux Falls Interagency Transition Council.

Strategy 2.5: Strengthen working relationships with entities, agencies, and organizations to enhance the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to underserved rural areas.

Division Activities:

- Funded the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network's website that promotes working with employers.
- Provided training and information to providers and other agencies about the VR process and services.
- Promotes the utilization of providers in rural areas and made training available for providers through video conferences, regional trainings and annual conference.

Strategy 2.6: Strengthen the extended services for assuring successful employment for clients using supported employment services.

Division Activities:

- Collaborate with the Division of Developmental Disabilities to implement an Employment First initiative in South Dakota.
- Member of the Core Stake Holders Advisory council and the Alliance for Full Participation initiative to promote the extended services for supported employment clients.

- Partnered with the Division of Developmental Disabilities in providing video conference training to providers of extended services.
- Conducted a survey of provider's training needs.
- Conducts an annual conference to include a training track for providers.
- Provided annually employment/benefits training sessions for providers, clients and their family members.

Goal 3: Division clients will have the skills, motivation and supports necessary to make informed choices for successful daily living, money management, personal and work relationships.

Strategy 3.1: Implement new strategies and tools for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in assessing the motivational state for VR clients as to their desire for employment.

Division Activities:

- Implemented a contract with PNA Change Consultants to provide technical assistance and additional training to VR Counselors.
- Completed training for all counselors on Cognitive Motivation Interviewing.
- Established a work group representing VR Counselors from each District Office to implement Motivational Interviewing Tools to assess the stage of change for eligible clients.
- Implemented new assessment tools to determine the level of motivation of a client.
- Conduct monthly training sessions/discussion groups in the District Offices.

Strategy 3.2: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will utilize new strategies and tools for assessing critical strengths and deficits in the client's personal life status and skills.

Division Activities:

- Made available the use of Workkeys Assessment, the World of Work Inventory (WOWI), and other assessments to VR clients.
- Revised and implemented the pre-assessment and the post-assessment for assessing an individual's stage of change.

Strategy 3.3: Build the assessments into the initial VR process.

Division Activities:

- Provided training to all VR Counselors on the pre-assessment and the post assessment tools. The pre-assessment is to be completed on all new eligible clients.
- Require VR Counselors to complete the rationale for goal selection and services for clients who jointly develop an Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Purchased Situational Assessments for 236 applicants/clients during FFY 2013.
- Purchased Independent Living Evaluation/Services for 40 applicants/clients during FFY 2013.

Strategy 3.4: Develop potential provider supports for life skills development.

Division Activities:

- Participated and promoted the South Dakota Employment Provider Training series held by video conference each month as part of the State Employment Leadership Network.
- Provided an annual employment specialists training that includes developing on-going supports for individuals with disabilities.
- Purchased Independent Living Evaluation/Services for 40 applicants/clients during FFY 2013.

Strategy 3.5: Increase the utilization of self-employment as an employment outcome for VR clients.

Division Activities:

- Refers all VR clients to the SD Business Development Center for assistance in putting their business plan together.
- Provide individuals seeking self-employment a guide to developing business plans.
- Description of self-employment is provided to all applicants when they apply for VR Services.
- The Business Assessment Scale is completed on individuals seeking self-employment and completed a business plan.
- Successfully closed cases of 11 individuals in self-employment during FFY 2013.

Goal 4: Students will enter their adult lives capable of self-advocacy with sufficient experience to make choices about work and career, being appropriately supported and living as independently as possible.

Strategy 4.1: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for VR clients who are attending post-secondary programs;

Division Activities:

- Sponsored the Youth Leadership Forum, which enabled 40 students with disabilities to attend the weeklong self-advocacy training program during FFY 2013.
- Sponsored five Catch the Wave Events during FFY 2013 where students with disabilities had the opportunity to attend a one day workshop on a college campus to learn about preparing for college life, securing appropriate accommodations, and developing self-advocacy and communication skills.
- District Supervisors met with public universities' Disability Service Coordinators in their District area.
- Sponsored a one day workshop for post-secondary disability services coordinators to share information and resources.
- Organized a work group to focus on post-secondary options for individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- Released Request for Proposals to fund a post-secondary training program in west river area to serve individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Strategy 4.2: Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future;

Division Activities:

- During FFY 2013, funded 390 students with disabilities in the Project Skills program.
- Transition Services Liaison Project continues to provide training to Special Education teachers about the use of South Dakota My Life tools in case planning.
- During FFY 2013, sponsored 40 students with disabilities during FFY 2013 to attend the week long Youth Leadership Forum.
- Sponsored five Catch the Wave Events during FFY 2013 where students with disabilities had the opportunity to attend a one day workshop on a college campus to learn about preparing for college life, securing appropriate accommodations, and developing self-advocacy and communication skills.
- Rapid City Division Office continues to partner with the Disability Employment Initiative which targets students with disabilities ages 18-24 utilizing a team approach to improve service coordination.
- Participated in a consortium with 5 other states in submitting a grant proposal for the Promise Grant.

Strategy 4.3: Educate teachers, students and their parents about Vocational Rehabilitation Services;

Division Activities:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors continue to meet with Guidance Counselors and the teachers of the schools in their territory at least once a year to introduce themselves, discuss available VR services, promote invitation to student's IEPs, and promote referrals of students on 504 plans.
- VR Counselors attend student's IEP meetings on a regular basis to explain VR services.
- Invite teachers to the annual fall conference and regional transition forums.
- Sponsored ten regional transition forums to promote services to teachers, students and their parents.
- Partners with South Dakota Parent Connection (PTI) to share information with parents through print and electronic publications.
- Attend events such as Community Connections Night for Young Adults and Parents.

Strategy 4.4: Expand transition services that have demonstrated effectiveness through evidence based practices such as Indicator 14. Indicator 14 is the outcome measure a year after high school for students who were on an Individual Education Plan.

Division Activities:

- Sponsors and promotes the utilization of best practices in school systems identified as being successful to improve long-term outcomes for students. (Project Skills, Project Search, Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave).
- Transition Services Liaison Project maintains a website with a resource list of transition documents, assessment tools and activities.

Federal Program Evaluation Standards

In accordance with the provisions of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education proposed the following evaluation standards (see Federal Register Vol.63, No. 198 issued on October 14, 1998 on Proposed Rules, pages 55292- 55305). The proposed standards 1 and 4 are based on section 106 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-220 of August 7, 1998), which contains the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. The proposed standards 2, 3, and 5 are not based on the Workforce Investment Act, but the Secretary believes that they are important factors in successful rehabilitation programs. Standards 1 and 2 have been finalized as published in the Federal Register Vol.65, No. 108 issued on June 5, 2000, pages 35792 - 35801. The remaining standards have not yet been finalized.

Standard 1: Employment Outcomes

Standard 1 is based on section 106 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-220 of August 7, 1998), which contains the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. This standard requires an agency to assist eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, to obtain, maintain, or regain high quality employment outcomes. The quality of an employment outcome is based on whether the outcome is consistent with the individual's vocational choices; is in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment; maintains or increases the individual's earnings; and allows medical insurance plans covering hospitalization. The following six performance indicators measure minimum compliance with this standard.

1. 1. Compare the total numbers of individuals obtaining an employment outcome during the current and previous performance periods.
- 1.2 Measure the number of persons obtaining an employment outcome as a percentage of all persons exiting the program after receiving VR services.
- 1.3. Measure the number of persons obtaining a competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment outcome as a percentage of all persons obtaining any type of employment outcome. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.4. Measure the percentage of competitively employed individuals who have significant disabilities. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.5. Measure the average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earnings levels equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.6. Measure the difference between the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage who report their own income as their largest single source of economic support and the percentage of individuals in that employment who reported their own income as their largest single source of support at the time they applied for VR services.

Standard 2: Equal Access to Services

Standard 2 requires compliance with one performance indicator which measures equality of access to rehabilitation services.

- 2.1. Measure whether individuals from minority backgrounds have been provided services at the same rate as non-minority individuals.

Assessment of the State VR Agency in meeting the Performance Standards and Indicators

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been monitoring the development of the performance standards and indicators. Utilizing the FFY 2013 data, the Division's performance was evaluated in meeting the minimum requirements for Standards 1 and 2. The following chart displays the outcome of this assessment.

Standard/Indicator	Minimum Requirement	Division's Outcome	Indicator Met
Standard 1: Employment Outcomes	4 of the 6 Indicators and 2 of the 3 Primary Indicators	6 of the 6 Indicators and 3 Primary Indicators were met	
Indicator 1.1	823	861	Yes
Indicator 1.2	55.8%	64.25%	Yes
Indicator 1.3 *	72.6%	100%	Yes
Indicator 1.4 *	62.4%	99.07%	Yes
Indicator 1.5 *	\$9.14 (estimated)	\$9.51	Yes
Indicator 1.6	53%	59.04%	Yes
Standard 2: Equal Access to Services	The Indicator must be met	The Indicator was met	
Indicator 2.1	80%	80.06%	Yes

* Designates Primary Indicators

Past Utilization of Innovation and Expansion Funds

Section 101 (a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Amended requires the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to reserve and use a portion of the funds for:

(i) The development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State; and

(ii) To support the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Prior to the 1998 Amendments of the Rehabilitation Act, the Division of Rehabilitation Services was required to utilize 1.5% of the Federal 110 funds for Innovation and Expansion (I&E) activities. The Division continues to use these funds at an increased percentage. During the 2013 State Fiscal year, \$157,196 was spent for I&E activities through a contract with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to provide staff support for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Independent Living Council. The contract provides for the following:

- ✓ Support staff for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council contracted through the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. This includes wages and benefits for .9 FTE Board support staff.
- ✓ Operational costs, equipment and travel for support staff and office supplies paid through the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.
- ✓ Costs involved in having members of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation or the Statewide Independent Living Council attend meetings/training.
- ✓ Strategic Planning Initiatives approved by the Board of VR to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services budgets approximately \$177,000 annually for support services and strategic planning activities for both the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council. Expenditures for the strategic planning activities for FY 2013 consist of the following:

\$150.00	Membership Dues and Donation to SDCCD
\$138.00	Plaques for outgoing BVR Members
\$500.64	Financial support of the Lower Brule Listening Session/Disability Gathering
\$12,000.00	Financial support of the 2013 NDEAM events
\$200.00	Financial support of the Eagle Butte Catch the Wave Event
12,988.64	Total Expenditures